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EDITORIAL

INCITING RIOTERS TO RIOT.

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EIGHTEEN noted politicians and beneficiaries of the despotism and cannibalism of the capitalist system of disorder—Nicholas M. Butler, President of Columbia University by the grace of political pull; Joseph H. Choate, ex-Ambassador to the Court of St. James by virtue of pull political; John W. Griggs, ex-Federal Attorney-General by dint of political back-doorism; Benjamin F. Tracy, though unable to tell a taffrail from a gaff-topsail, McKinley's Secretary of the Navy, by dint of back-doors politicianism; Thomas L. James, Postmaster General under Garfield thanks to political witchcraft; Cornelius N. Bliss, treasurer of the celebrated Republican National Committee that helped loot Insurance Companies for campaign funds; together with twelve other such “non-political” beauty spots—have joined in a petition to the Republican national convention which spells nothing short of “Inciting Rioters to Riot.”

The petitioners request the Committee on Resolutions to insert a plank in the Republican national platform of this year pledging the party to uphold “confidence in the integrity and justice of the Courts,” State and National. He who runs can read what the petition means. One of its signers, however, ex-Attorney-General Griggs, anxious to make the language still plainer, explains that “the Courts must not be interfered with.” In other words, the Executive may be interfered with; the Legislative may be interfered with; but the Judiciary—hands off from the Holy of Holies!

The Constitution expressly subordinates the Judiciary to the Legislative. Even if the term regarding the “co-ordinate nature” of the two departments were absolutely correct, the theory set up by the previous petitioners is a wrenching awry of the Constitution. They would put the Judiciary above the Legislature. The Legislature may be attacked, according to them; the Judiciary never. Confidence in

the integrity of the Legislature, State and National, may be questioned, is in fact, questioned at each recurring campaign; confidence in the integrity of the Judiciary, State and National—nay, never, never, not even hardly ever. The fact, however, is that the Constitution does not place the two departments on an absolute equality. Congress may impeach any, or all of the judges; the Judiciary can not impeach Congress—and the constitutions of all the States are patterned after the same formula.

Wise is the Constitutional provision. The terms of both Executives and Legislatives are short. At intervals of from two to four years, the people can get at them; yank them down and out if it lost confidence in their integrity. The members of the Judiciaries have longer terms. The Constitution wisely provided for a means by which the Judiciary could be held in check ALL THE TIME. The reason was obvious. Not, surely, that judges were sacred institutions; on the contrary, that, what with the nature of their office and their longer terms, they needed the club to be perpetually held over their heads. In short, the Constitutional provision was intended as a guarantee against autocracy. It is a petition to abrogate the Constitution in the direction of autocracy that the petitioners have in mind.

Now, then, autocracy, in these days, spells “riot.” We see it even in Russia. Bred to autocracy tho’ her people are, riot is to-day the normal condition of the Czar’s domains. Set up autocracy here in America, and riot must become the social condition of the land.

The precious petitioners are such “washed” rioters that the words “To hell with the Constitution!” would be too unclean for their choice lips. They leave such unclean frankness to the lieutenants of their Sherman Bells. Nevertheless, they have the identical thing in mind.

What is capitalism, now that its mission is fulfilled, but rioting? The petitioners contemplate reducing riot to a system.

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